

SECRETARY OF DEFENSE WILLIAM J. PERRY
REMARKS EN ROUTE TO WASHINGTON, D.C., FROM BRUSSELS, BELGIUM
JULY 23, 1994

SECRETARY PERRY: What I propose to do is spend about five minutes, give you a quick overview of the trip and then, if you'd like, go off the record and just chat for a few minutes.

Let me summarize. There were three major issues that I was pursuing on this trip; the first of which was trying to get the assessments on Bosnia -- you've heard me say that a half a dozen times already. We were truly seeking the assessment and the advice of all of these neighbors of Bosnia on the proper course of action from the US and the international community to take on Bosnia.

The second was pursuing the NATO and Partnership for Peace issues. All of these countries we visited with the exception of Croatia were either NATO members or members of Partnership for Peace, so we had a lot of issues to discuss in that regard.

Third, all of these countries we have bilateral relationships with. In the case of the NATO nations, they are long standing bilateral relationships. In the case of these new Partnership for Peace nations, most of them we've established something called a "bilateral working group" where we get a team from the US and a team from there and we exchange visits back and forth and work in detail to plan out our programs.

I thought I'd go backwards and take the bilateral [first.] In some ways, it's the least important of this trip, but actually we did a lot that I have not been reporting as I went along. The first issue on bilateral is really not something that one reports on, is that it gave us an opportunity to build personal relationships with our counterparts in these countries, MOD to Secretary of Defense. Joe Kruzel established close relationships with his counterparts -- the JCS, we had State Dept. and NSC people on the trip, too.

I value that very highly. I probably now know, or know on a more or less first name basis, 30 or 40 MOD's around the world and when issues come up when we need their support or we need their understanding, it really helps to be able to pick up the phone and call somebody you know and ask for their assistance. When we went to Aviano last February, I'd been Secretary a week. I had to do that to rally the support of the British, the French, the Italian MOD who I just barely knew at that time. Fortunately, we were able to pull that off and actually had a good meeting out of that. But that sort of a situation, where you need to rally some governments to help you, and you're able to go right to the MOD, that's a very important fact. So I rate that as a very high value on a trip like this.

We had a whole set of specifics -- with signing documents of cooperation and setting up bilateral working groups and talking about specific issues with each of these

countries. All of that was valuable and it was important, but I want to put some perspective on the broader relationships which are perhaps the most important part.

Looking at some of the particular bilaterals, I want to call out one in particular, which is that in each of the countries we visited -- the three NATO countries we visited -- we discussed traditional issues, traditional problems.

One of the things that really struck me, though, was that Turkey of all of these nations, with the ending of the Cold War, Turkey has increased security problems, rather than decreased security problems. Just look at the neighborhood it's in. You look at Iraq on one side; Iran on one side; Syria on one side; and the Caucasus on the other side. All of the problems going on in Armenia and Azerbaijan are right in their backyard. They consider that their security problems have dramatically increased since the ending of the Cold War so that gives a very different perspective on security in Turkey than we had anywhere else that we visited.

In the five Balkan countries that we visited, Romania, Bulgaria, Macedonia, Albania, and Croatia, our focus, which is both for Partnership for Peace and bilateral, is tied to helping them establish their defense establishments within a democracy. I cannot overemphasize how very different the organization, the structure, and the way of military functions within a democracy as opposed to the authoritarian government they were all in before. They had a very hard time dealing with that. Most of them are actively seeking our assistance because they really want to make that transformation and they're looking at us as the model and they want us to help with that.

The first, the foremost part of that is civilian control of the military which we take for granted in our society, but it's very hard for these nations to adapt to. They see us as a model. Some of them are trying very hard. Did you notice in Albania they've appointed a civilian Minister of Defense, but he's a mathematics professor who's never done anything like this before. He's really seeking our assistance and advice and we try very much to help him with it.

We looked at the various assistance programs we have. We have limited resources we can use to assist these countries but we have the leverage now (inaudible). There's a limited amount of equipment we can pass on in the so-called "Excess Defense Articles Program," all non-lethal. You may have noticed that in Bulgaria, for example, the Minister of Defense was expecting us to outfit a peacekeeping battalion. I had to correct him; we can't do that. We have limited excess defense articles and what we do have are all non-lethal. We are not willing to pass weapons on to them.

The other part of that cooperation program, though, which is the training and education part, is really important and really high leverage. You all saw firsthand just what that amounted to in Albania when we went out to that ranger regiment there. What that represents is one person who goes back to our ranger training school as part of our so-called "IMET" program. IMET is the acronym for Military Education and Training. I think the "I" is for "International."

That modest investment sent this person, not only learning the techniques and the training approaches the rangers use, but coming back very much believing that America, in general, and the US military, in particular, is the model they ought to copy. Brought that back there -- his Minister of Defense gave him 600 people and said, you've got a regiment; now make a ranger regiment out of it. We were there just two or three months after he'd done that and you saw what he had done. You also saw the resources he had to work with. To me, that was a real success story. We're going to do everything we can, first of all, to help that person succeed, to build on his success and then to get Albania and other countries to emulate that success.

That means we focus on IMET. First of all, we want to increase our resources on IMET. I will be working within the US executive branch, with State and with Congress to try to get more resources for the IMET program because it's the best value for dollar we get possibly get out of one of these programs. The reason I mention this in particular, is that IMET has been decreasing in the last year and I want to get that turned around. It's part of the State Dept. budget; it's not in the Defense Department budget. So I have to go to a two-cushion billiard chart here to get the Secretary of State as much interested in this as I am and then we, together, go over and try to argue the case with the Congress. So we will do that.

The other thing we want to do within our net is with whatever resources we have, is get them much more sharply focused. And the image that I saw with Major Hima is the example of how to do that. You can't train all the Albanian military, but you can train the trainers. One man can make a difference. One woman can make a difference. And we will train the person who we think will make the difference and let him go over to do it.

Shifting from the bilaterals to the NATO and the Partnership for Peace. The first comment I'm going to make about NATO, is that I spent a lot of time in NATO back in the late 70's when I was the Undersecretary of Defense. Went to all the NATO meetings. Soaked up all the NATO things and thought I understood it very well. Today, I have a very different view of NATO. With the ending of the Cold War, one of the changes is that the emphasis of NATO has shifted from the Central front to the Southern flank. We were in the part of the world which is dramatically increasing in importance to NATO today. That's not only my judgment; it's the judgment of all the people that I've talked with on this trip. That's where the security issues are. That's where you have to truly put the emphasis, the resources together to deal with it.

The second closely related point is that the security issues and instabilities in Southeast Europe are going to pose difficult problems for us for the foreseeable future and that's why we have to get our security attention directed to there, both with NATO and with the Partnership for Peace.

The other insight that I gained on this trip, I think, relative to Partnership for Peace, is that these joint exercises and joint training that we're doing in Partnership for Peace have the obvious value of training, but they also have an indirect, very important benefit of what

we call "confidence building measures." If you look at the problems in the region, a lot of them are problems one neighbor has with the other, and as we bring them together in joint exercises, that in itself is a confidence building measure which helps them work together with a neighbor with whom they've been having problems for centuries. So we're going to make a major focus on Partnership for Peace to try to effect that confidence building measure, to help deal with regional security issues. We'll be working very hard on that.

The last issue was Bosnia and as I told you, what I was doing there was getting assessment from all eight of the nations we visited and their advice to pass on to the President. Now I have that; I have not, quite obviously, had an opportunity to brief the President on it, so I can't give you an on-the-record report on that one at this time. What I would suggest at this stage is that if you have a question or two about what I've just covered, we could do that, but when we're done with that then switch over and I'll give you a few minutes off-the-record.

Q. I don't know if you want to answer this on-the-record or off. When you talked about these cooperation and confidence building measures, are you looking at linking specific groupings of nations such as Turkey, Romania, Bulgaria, Greece, Albania, Macedonia -- not necessarily getting Turkey and Greece there together, but a NATO nation with some of the others?

A. That's exactly what I mean by "confidence building measure." To the extent that security issues between Greece and Albania -- one way we can help deal with those issues is propose a three-country exercise, US, Greece, Albania -- maybe it's four countries, maybe Italy's involved also.

Q. Would they actually do it?

A. We'll find out because we're going to be proposing things like that.

Q. Might be training for the real thing. (Laughter)

A. These are peacekeeping exercises. But it does bring people together in planning. It brings military to military together.

Q. One other question before you go to Bosnia. Since you say the focus of NATO is shifting southward, would you envision any of the US force structure still in Europe moving southward on a more permanent basis.

Q. I would not because the cost of moving resources like that and bases and so on is very great. Secondly, we've got well-developed facilities in Germany now. And they're quite accessible. The region we're talking about is quite accessible to those bases in Germany. I don't see any need to do that and certainly the expense would be very big. You may have noticed that the Aviano base which we were visiting is ordinarily fully occupied. That is, we have all the activity going on on that base than it can really accommodate. That's true of the other air bases in Italy, too. So we'd have to give -- NATO's infrastructure would

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have to give their cases for building more bases down there. I think we could use NATO's and US resources better ways than that.

END OF ON-THE-RECORD INTERVIEW